

I CLAIM:

1. A method of treating a SARS or ARDS patient, comprising:
administering to the patient an effective amount of an agent selected from the group consisting of: substance P, [Met-OH¹¹]-substance P, [Met-OMe¹¹]-substance P, [Nle¹¹]-substance P, [Pro⁹]-substance P, [Sar⁹]-substance P, [Tyr⁸]-substance P, Sar⁹, Met (O₂) 11-Substance P, and [p-Cl-Phe^{7,8}]-substance P, whereby a disease feature selected from the group consisting of: Clara cell necrosis, pulmonary alveolar macrophage number, neutrophil number, alveolar-capillary barrier membrane damage, and 6-keto-PGF_{1α} and PGE₂ concentration is decreased.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the patient is a SARS patient.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the patient is an ARDS patient.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein Sar⁹, Met (O₂) 11-Substance P is administered.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein Substance P is administered.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of administering is performed by inhalation of an aerosol.
7. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of administering is performed by intravenous delivery.
8. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of administering is performed by intramuscular delivery.
9. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of administering is performed by sublingual delivery.

10. A method of protecting an individual prior to or after exposure to a patient with SARS or ARDS from developing SARS or ARDS, comprising:
administering to the individual an effective amount of an agent selected from the group consisting of: substance P, [Met-OH¹¹]-substance P, [Met-OMe¹¹]-substance P, [Nle¹¹]-substance P, [Pro⁹]-substance P, [Sar⁹]-substance P, [Tyr⁸]-substance P, Sar⁹, Met (0₂) 11-Substance P, and [p-Cl-Phe^{7,8}]-substance P, whereby risk of developing SARS or ARDS is reduced.
11. The method of claim 10 wherein the agent is substance P.
12. The method of claim 10 wherein the agent is Sar⁹, Met (0₂) 11-Substance P.
13. The method of claim 10 wherein the step of administering is performed by inhalation of an aerosol.
14. The method of claim 10 wherein the step of administering is performed by intravenous delivery.
15. The method of claim 10 wherein the step of administering is performed by intramuscular delivery.
16. The method of claim 10 wherein the step of administering is performed by sublingual delivery.